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PUTRAJAYA: To ensure that beauty treatments do not turn ugly, the Health Ministry has drawn up a set of do's and don'ts on aesthetic medicine. With immediate effect, private general practitioners are not allowed to carry out procedures such as breast implants, liposuction, eyelid surgery, laser and light-based therapies and hair transplant. They also cannot deal with unapproved agents, inject non-evidence based products like Vitamin C, placental extract, stem cells and growth hormones.

The list, drawn up following a meeting last month with relevant stakeholders, will be included in the Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Act 1998 under the director-general's directive. A definition of aesthetic medicine has also been drawn up. It states it is a branch of medicine dedicated to creating a harmonious physical and psychological balance using non-invasive and minimally invasive treatment modalities. The modalities have to be evidence-based and scientifically proven on matters such as the anatomy and skin physiology.

Director-general of health Tan Sri Dr Ismail Merican said yesterday that only trained and credentialed personnel could do Botox treatment. He added that the general practitioners could, with proper credentials and training from a recognised institute, advise on matters such as medical cosmetology, chemical peels, cellulite control, hair removal and nutrition.

It does not mean the general practitioner has no role but they should be concentrating on procedures which are not invasive, he said.

He added that because aesthetic medicine was not a recognised medical speciality in Malaysia, the word 'aesthetic' was not allowed to be displayed on signboards.

Dr Ismail added that a proposal would be submitted to register specialists in aesthetic practices in the registry being compiled by the Malaysian Medical Council and Academy of Medicine.

He said it was necessary to draw up such guidelines because the ministry was concerned about developments in the field and wanted to keep unscrupulous practices at bay.

If you want to look pretty, do it the right way. Make sure the right people provide you with the services, he said.